

Series: **A Firm Foundation** – week 7

CDOBC – beginning on 8/28/16

Today's Title: **"Remember the Truth"**

October 9, 2016 ~ 2 Peter 3:1-7

OBJECTIVE: To help people have confidence in God's promises - specifically the promise of His return and judgment.

Opening Prayer

Open your Bible to **2 Peter 3**

What are you hopeful for?

What keeps you going day-after-day?

What excites you and motivates you about the future?

- Your favorite sports team might win a championship?
- Your career might take a giant leap forward in the next year or two?
- Your kids will graduate and find a great spouse and a great job - and become independent?
- The upcoming election?

We put our hopes in all sorts of things. Many / most of these things are good - worthy of our effort and devotion - but they all fall short of giving us lasting, stable hope - because they're all temporal - earthly - and at some point unstable.

As Christians, our hope and motivation must come from things which will last into the next life - into eternity.

Our hope and motivation must come from God - His Word and the promises we find in His Word. So... let me ask you 2

questions relating to God - His Word and the promises found in His Word:

- Do you believe Jesus is going to physically return?
- Do you believe there is yet a future judgment for all unbelievers?

There are many views and opinions in our day on these 2 topics. These varied opinions are nothing new or novel.

For the skeptic and scoffer:

The teaching and belief in the future judgement of God toward unbelievers has always been ridiculed and dismissed as some sort of delusional way to keep people in-line.

The teaching and belief of Jesus' return - His second coming has also been ridiculed as a way to give hope to the hopeless and weak.

For the believer or religiously interested:

The teaching and belief in God's future judgment and the return of Christ have often been taught in a cloud of error. Christian 'teachers' make predictions for the date of Christ's return - even though the Bible is crystal clear: "But concerning that day or that hour, no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father." (Mark 13:32). Most recently, we see Jesus' words ignored by false teacher Harold Camping - who died in December 2013. Over the years he made predictions of when the world would end - his last prediction was the

world would end on May 21, 2011. It never seemed to matter his previous predictions were obviously proven false - he still attracted many followers! (2 Peter 2:2)

Other 'teachers' boldly and rashly declare modern-day calamities, tragedies and acts of evil are God's judgment against certain groups of people.

I believe both of these practices are extremely foolish - they are full of error - they mislead people and are extremely arrogant as they claim to know the heart and workings of God in current events.

The second coming of Christ and God's judgment of unbelievers has been fertile soil for false teachers and the cults as they mislead people, misinterpret Scripture - and lie to people so they can control their followers and exploit their followers for their own pleasures.

In chapter 2 of 2 Peter, the Apostle holds nothing back and speaks powerfully and forcefully about false teachers and their motives and depravity. Today we begin chapter 3 - and in our passage today, Peter encourages the believers who would read his letter by giving some very helpful wisdom and truth concerning the future return of Christ and God's future judgment of unbelievers. He begins with:

A reminder to remember God's Word vs. 1-2

1:12

“Therefore I intend always to remind you of these qualities, though you know them and are established in the truth that you have.”

“This is now the second letter that I am writing to you, beloved. In both of them I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder, 2 that you should remember the predictions of the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior through your apostles...”

So many people are looking for something ‘new’ - something ‘fresh’ - something never before heard.

Ironically...this search for something new is not new!

Illus. - “Still Life with Bible” - Was painted by Vincent van Gogh - reportedly in 1 day - in October 1885 - which likely speaks to the passion behind the painting.

Van Gogh’s father was a pastor of the Dutch Reformed Church in the Netherlands.

They had a turbulent relationship up until his father's death at the end of March, 1885. 7 months later, he painted this painting.

For Van Gogh the Bible represented everything he saw in his father: blind devotion to religion and faith, forever trapped in an antiquated mindset. The Bible is open to **Isaiah 53** which is a Messianic passage referring to Jesus as “a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief . . . he was despised and we esteemed him not.”

Most believe the snuffed out candle is a clear symbol of his father's life and work - but there is more to this painting than an attempt to memorialize his father.

It's a critique of his father and his father's faith.

The booklet lying on the table just in front of the Bible was written by naturalist Émile Zola in 1884. In English, the book is titled, *The Joy of Life* - which is a sarcastic title since the book is essentially an analysis of human suffering and misery.

The biblical text is illegible. The novel's title is legible. The Bible sits silently in the dark shadows, a relic of his father's generation, an extinguished age. The new novel is bright, alive, and relevant. The Bible is calm, clean, and seems abandoned. The novel is dirty and misshapen from use.”

(<http://www.desiringgod.org/articles/the-van-gogh-that-breaks-my-heart>)

The desire to *hear something new* is not unique to our generation or culture.

The writer of **Ecclesiastes** tells us: “there is nothing new under the sun.” (1:9). It's a fools-errand to look for something new and novel regarding God - when He's made it perfectly clear in His Word - “there is nothing new under the sun.”

In some cases, Pastors and churches can certainly take the blame for making God's Word boring and dull -

which certainly causes people to want something fresh and new - but you must know - we have God's revelation in the Bible - it is complete and as Paul told Timothy: (2 Timothy 3:16)

“All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.”

Psalm 19:7a

“The law of the LORD is perfect...”

2 Peter 1:21

“For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.”

The Bible does not need to be supplemented - or updated like the apps on your phone.

Peter's goal is to “stir(ing) up your sincere mind by way of reminder”, which means he wants to wake us up - to make sure we're aware of what's going on.

The same term was used in **Luke 8:24** when the disciples woke up Jesus when they encountered storms on the Sea of Galilee.

Peter wants to *wake us up* with the historical and doctrinal truths we find in God's Word.

Even the godly need to be stirred up every now and then and reminded of these things!

“sincere mind” is a reference to their right thinking - biblical thinking. As a Christian, it's important for you

to realize the role your mind plays in your daily living for Christ. The mind of a believer looks at life - looks at the world - their job, their marriage, their family, their friends, their hobbies, their health and fitness, their politics, their finances - all of these things a believer views from a biblical point of view. This doesn't happen automatically - it's cultivated over time as you read, study and apply the bible to your daily life.

As Paul said in **Romans 12:2**, we should be “transformed by the renewal of your mind”.

When this happens in your life, you will learn the O.T. prophecies about Christ and the future judgment of God - and you'll learn what Jesus taught and what the Apostles taught as you read and learn the N.T. Peter knows how important it is to stir us up by reminding us to remember what God's Word (both O.T. & N.T.) says.

Are you reading and learning God's Word?

Are you listening to godly, biblically faithful sermons and media which can help you grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ?

Are you molding your life around the truth of God's Word?

A warning: Ridicule is coming! vs. 3-4

“...knowing this first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires.

4 They will say, ‘Where is the promise of His coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation.’

It’s important for you to know - as a follower of Jesus Christ - as someone who believes the Bible is the inspired, authoritative, inerrant Word of God - you will be mocked and ridiculed. You will be ridiculed for your belief in the inspired Word of God and your belief in the 2nd coming of Christ.

(vs. 3 - “last days” is the time between Jesus’ 1st coming and His 2nd coming)

The repetition of “scoffers will come in the last days scoffing” is a Hebraism - a Jewish idiom which emphasizes the point.

This was not only true in the 1st century - but it’s true in our day as well.

Believers in Christ who have a high-view of the Bible are disrespected and lampooned as fools in the culture at-large.

For a people-pleaser like me - this was difficult to get used to and come to terms with.

But notice what else Peter says about the scoffers (false teachers included): they will follow “their own sinful desires.”

I won't repeat the lessons of chapter 2 - but those who ridicule the inspiration and authority of the Bible usually do so to enable their sinful lifestyle.

Theologian Michael Green says:

“For men who live in the world of the relative (consider the last few weeks where I’ve talked about how relativistic and overly-tolerant our culture is...), the claim that the relative will be ended by the absolute is nothing short of ludicrous. For men who nourish a belief in human self-determination and perfectibility, the very idea that we are accountable and dependent is a bitter pill to swallow. No wonder they mocked!”

(Michael Green, quoted in The MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 2 Peter & Jude, by John MacArthur, p. 113)

Romans 14:12

“So then each of us will give an account of himself to God.”

Scoffers mock the return of Christ - and they scoff at the future judgment of God.

Since they can't argue against the ethical and moral position of Scripture - they just ignore Scripture!

If you don't like a specific law - just ignore the law!

This may alleviate the conscience for a season - but it doesn't negate the law - or the eventual judgement.

The scoffer's argument hasn't changed in the past 2,000+ years.

This argument is known as *uniformitarianism* - “a view which believes the only natural forces that have ever operated

in the past are the same processes at work today. It categorically denies divine intervention throughout world history, most notably opposing both 6-day creation and the global Flood.”

(The MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 2 Peter & Jude, by John MacArthur, p. 114)

They view the apparent *regularity of history* and discard the promises of God’s Word.

They don’t see it...so they don’t believe it!

Hebrews 11:1,3

“Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen...By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God...”

This is the opposite of the scoffer’s view.

The “scoffers” looked at history - and the sun rose and the sun set every day for thousands of years.

The cycle of the seasons were dependable each year.

The ocean tide, the cycle of life in nature - planting and harvesting - all seem to run on their own - without any obvious involvement from God.

Since the “fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation.”

There are 2 blatant things wrong with this view:

1) All things have not been “as they were” from the beginning of creation.

God has worked in history - in small, miraculous ways - and in large, miraculous ways.

In each case, He interrupted the status quo of nature or of nations so that things were not the same as they always were! God's work in the past is a preview of His future work!

2) They fail to recognize God's work of creation!

Creation is not a result of nature's own efforts.

By using creation as the starting point for their timeline, they are ignoring perhaps the largest proof of God's interaction with and interruption of the status quo of the way things were - His work of creation by the mere power of His Word!

By failing to see God's interaction and interruption of the natural order of things, they are ignoring a great deal of the Bible's testimony and as they do so, they are attempting to establish a new 'normal' - a new 'baseline' by which history will be viewed.

If you ignore and never talk about God's supernatural work throughout history, eventually, people will forget about God's supernatural work throughout history.

This is why God commanded the Jewish people - and by extension it's a command for us to teach our children the Word of God and God's work throughout history as we go about the routines of daily life.

"You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise."

Deuteronomy 6:7

If we don't do this - the next generation will not know about God - or His work throughout history. This is what happened to Israel as they occupied the Promised Land - the generation after Joshua grew up in spiritual ignorance.

“And all that generation also were gathered to their fathers. And there arose another generation after them who did not know the LORD or the work that He had done for Israel.”

Judges 2:10

But the problem Peter is addressing was not an ignorance due to a lack of knowledge - it was:

Intentional ignorance vs. 5-6

5 “For they deliberately overlook this fact...”

This was not a lack of information - it was not a by-product of never hearing about God's work of creation and the global Flood.

They chose to ignore these realities of history.

Their ignorance is intentional / willful - simply choosing to discard sections of the Bible and history which are inconvenient for them. They know what God has done in history - they know what the Bible says - and they

“deliberately overlook this fact...”

What “fact(s)” is Peter referring to?

“...that the heavens existed long ago, and the earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God, 6 and that by

means of these the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished.”

Not much has changed over the past 2,000 years!

Creation - and the global Flood are still being attacked and ridiculed by those who scoff at the Bible.

Even some in the church have questions and doubts about these 2 events. Evolution and the rise of naturalism - which brings with it a denial of supernatural events like Creation and the Flood have made an impact not only in the culture - but in the church as well.

Do you believe the Bible’s teaching about the Creation of the universe - and the global Flood?

A reminder of future judgment vs. 7

7 But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly.”

After the Flood, God promised never to destroy the earth by floodwaters again.

Genesis 9:11

“I establish My covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of the flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth.”

Instead of a flood, the Bible is clear - God’s final judgment will be with fire. In vs. 10 Peter tells us “the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved.”

In **1 Corinthians 3:13**, the Apostle Paul told us, “each one's work...will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done.”

Peter is making 2 primary points here in vs. 7.

First, God will judge the ungodly in the future on the “day of judgment”.

Second, the future judgment will be by the Word of God. God created the heavens and earth by the power of His spoken Word - and He will judge unbelievers / the “ungodly” - along with the sin-scarred creation with His spoken Word.

vs. 5 - “...the earth was formed out of water and through water **by the word of God...**”

vs. 6 - and that by means of **these** the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished. (“these” - plural personal pronoun - refers to God’s Word and the flood waters)

vs. 7 - But **by the same word** the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire...”

This is not a judgment for believers. It’s for the “ungodly” - unbelievers. When it speaks of their “destruction”, he’s not talking about annihilation or they will cease to exist - the Greek word has the idea of ‘*ruin and loss*’.

Once again - don’t let the *regularity of history* cause you to think God is no longer involved with His creation.

He will judge the ungodly - the current heavens and earth will pass away - and a new heaven and earth will be in place for eternity.

7 But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly.”

Apply it...

Never stop growing in God’s Word

Learn doctrine – be reminded of God’s truth - Don’t look for ‘new’ - be an expert in the grace and knowledge of Christ.

Develop thick Christian skin

Don’t let scoffers get to you - develop a thick Christian skin, stand strong in the truth of the Bible - yet make sure your heart stays tender and loving.

Take comfort in the promises of God

He is coming again - He will judge the ungodly.
His promises in the past prove He will be faithful to His promises in the future.

Close in prayer

In closing prayer - ‘intro’ the song: “Be unto Your Name” - *We are a moment, you are forever, Lord of the ages, God before time - we are a vapor, you are eternal - Love everlasting reigning on high*

James 4:14b

“For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes.”